

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 EA-07
FRB-03 INR-07 IO-13 NEA-10 NSAE-00 OPIC-03 SP-02
TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGRE-00 OMB-01 AF-08 ARA-06 L-03
H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 SS-15 NSC-05 OIC-02 USIE-00 INRE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ISO-00 /120 W
-----100128Z 094725 /63 S

O R 100120Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION OECD PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASH DC IMMEDIATE 5651

INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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PASS USDA FOR SECY BERGLAND, EUR FOR HARTMAN, EB FOR KATZ

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, OECD

SUBJECT PROPOSED MINISTERIAL MEETING OF OECD AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE

REF: C(77)12; OECD PARIS 29697, PARA 13 (1976)

1. WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT DEPARTMENT AND USDA
FOCUS AT HIGH LEVEL ON WHETHER OR NOT TO ACCEDE TO
SECGEN VAN LENNEP'S PROPOSAL TO HOLD AN OECD AGRICULTURAL
MINISTERIAL MEETING' AND THE BEST TIMING OF SUCH A
MEETING. VAN LENNEP RECOMMENDS OCTOBER 6 AND 7.

2. WE WILL NEED INSTRUCTIONS BY THE END OF THIS WEEK
FOR A COUNCIL MEETING MARCH 14. VAN LENNEP WANTS TO
GET COUNCIL AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE BEFORE THE
AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MEETS ON MARCH 16.

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3. THE SECRETARIAT'S RATIONALE FOR HOLDING SUCH A
MEETING IS SET FORTH IN THE REFERENCE DOCUMENT WHICH
HAS BEEN AVAILABLE IN WASHINGTON AND UNDER CONSIDERATION
AS WE UNDERSTAND IT BY THE WORKING LEVEL.

4. THE IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT THE SECRETARIAT WOULD

LIKE TO OFFER OECD'S FACILITIES FOR A DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN POLICY ISSUES OF THE DAY AMONG THE MINISTERS OF MEMBER COUNTRIES. WHILE ESCHEWING ANY DUPLICATION OF NEGOTIATIONS IN OTHER FORA THEY ASSERT THAT THE DISCUSSION AMONG THE 24 AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS ON THE BASIS OF CAREFULLY PREPARED ANALYTICAL PAPERS CAN ADVANCE INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BASIC ISSUES AND THEREBY GIVE A POSITIVE IMPULSE TO NEGOTIATIONS ELSEWHERE. THEY BELIEVE SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE PARTICULARLY OPPORTUNE IN VIEW OF CHANGES IN GOVERNMENTS AND POLICIES IN SOME COUNTRIES AND INCREASING RECOGNITION OF THE HIGH COSTS OF PRESENT POLICIES IN OTHERS. SECRETARIAT HAS IN MIND IN PARTICULAR THE NEW POLICIES BEING ADVANCED BY SECRETARY BERGLAND, NEW THINKING IN EC COMMISSION INCLUDING PROPOSALS TO REORIENT DAIRY POLICY TOWARD "CO-RESPONSIBILITY" (I.E. MORE MARKET ORIENTATION) OF PRODUCERS, AND A QUESTIONING BY SWEDEN OF ITS AGRICULTURAL POLICIES.

5. (A) THUS SECRETARIAT PROPOSES AGENDA WITH "AGRICULTURAL POLICIES AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETS" AS A SINGLE ITEM SUBDIVIDED INTO (1) MARKET INSTABILITY' (2) FOOD POLICY AND (3) POLICY VIS-A-VIS LDC'S. (IN C(77)12, TOPIC (3) IS MORE GENERALLY FORMULATED AS' "THE COHERENCE OF POLICIES AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL'.)

(B) END PRODUCT UNDER FIRST ITEM MIGHT BE CONSENSUS TO ENHANCE CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION AMONG MAJOR PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS TO PREVENT RECURRENCE OF EXCESSIVE FLUCTUATIONS OF RECENT YEARS. SECRETARIAT IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT LOW PRICES IN 1977 MIGHT LEAD TO 1978 SHORTAGES AND PRICE INCREASES AUGMENTING OTHER ANTICIPATED INFLATIONARY PRESSURES.

(C) END PRODUCT UNDER SECOND ITEM MIGHT BE INSTRUCTION TO ORGANIZATION TO PURSUE ITS WORK IN HELPING GOVERNMENTS DEVELOP CONCEPT OF FOOD POLICY AS BEING BROADER (AND MORE USEFUL FROM A LIBERAL TRADE POLICY POINT OF VIEW) THAN AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

(D) UNDER POLICY VIS-A-VIS LDC'S THE SECRETARIAT HOPES TO ADVANCE RECOGNITION OF COUNTRIES' RESPONSIBILITIES TO OPEN MARKETS TO LDC FOOD PRODUCTS WHICH IN MANY CASES RESULT FROM DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION.

(E) FINALLY, THE SECRETARIAT THINKS SOME USEFUL SIDE TALKS MIGHT BE ORGANIZED ON THE THORNY PROBLEM OF USSR AND EASTERN EUROPE.

(F) AS FOR SCENARIO, SECRETARIAT IS THINKING OF ENCOURAGING MINISTERS TO SPEAK SPECIFICALLY TO THESE ISSUES DURING THE FIRST DAY. MINISTERS WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT SET SPEECHES ON THEIR OWN NATIONAL

POLICIES FOR THE RECORD AND FOR THE PRESS. FOLLOWING
THIS CAREFULLY STRUCTURED DISCUSSION ON THE FIRST DAY,
THE SECRETARIAT WOULD LIKE TO ORGANIZE A GIVE AND TAKE

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 ISO-00 /120 W
-----100131Z 094703 /63 S

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DISCUSSION ON THE SECOND DAY ON A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS WHICH AROSE THE FIRST DAY. THE SECRETARIAT IS
LOOKING FOR AN ACTIVIST CHAIRMAN AND SOLICITS
SUGGESTIONS.

6. THERE ARE OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES IN BRINGING TOGETHER
THE MINISTERS OF ALL THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. IT WOULD
BE AN EFFICIENT WAY FOR SECRETARY BERGLAND TO MEET THOSE
OF HIS OPPOSITE NUMBERS WHOM HE HAS NOT MET BY THE TIME
OF THE MEETING. THE SECRETARIAT REPORTS THAT CANADIAN,
FRENCH,
AND GERMAN AGRICULTURE MINISTERS HAVE EXPRESSED DESIRE
TO MEET THEIR COLLEAGUES IN THIS FASHION.

7. MEETING WOULD ALSO BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SECRETARY
BERGLAND TO DELIVER A MAJOR POLICY STATEMENT AND AN
EFFICIENT WAY TO "GET THROUGH" TO THE MAIN PEOPLE

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RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN THE ADVANCED COUNTRIES. MEDIA COVERAGE IN EUROPE AND JAPAN CAN ALSO BE EXPECTED TO BE GOOD.

8. ON THE OTHER HAND, ON THE BASIS OF PAST EXPERIENCE' WASHINGTON SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE MORE TANGIBLE BENEFITS AND UTILITY OF SUCH A MEETING IS HARD TO ASSESS IN ADVANCE. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS AND DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN POLICY ISSUES AT THE TIME, AND WHETHER AND HOW THE MINISTERS FROM THE COMMUNITY COUNTRIES AND THE AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER WILL BE READY TO ENGAGE IN A MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION.

9. OF THE COMMUNITY ONLY THE UK IS REPORTED IN OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL AND THAT OPPOSITION SEEMS TO BE MERELY THE ONE-MAN OPPOSITION OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY JOHN EDWARDS. OECD SECRETARIAT REPORTS THAT COMMISSION (ON LEVEL OF MALVE) IS PREPARED TO GO ALONG. THE COMMUNITY MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE CAUCUSED ON THE PROPOSAL IN BRUSSELS AND HERE AND REACHED ONLY A SORT OF LEAST COMMON DENOMINATOR CONCLUSION OF WILLINGNESS TO GO ALONG WITH THE MAJORITY. ALTHOUGH THE EC WOULD PREFER TO POSTPONE MEETING UNTIL 1978, IT WILL GO ALONG WITH THE MAJORITY ON THE DAY.

10. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ALSO REPORTED TO FAVOR THE MEETING WITH AUSTRALIANS PREFERRING BACK TO BACK TIMING WITH FAO IN NOVEMBER. SECRETARIAT BELIEVES SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT UNDESIRABLE IN THAT IT MIGHT BE REGARDED AS SETTING UP OECD AS RICH MAN'S CAUCUS FOR FAO. IT WOULD OPPOSE A PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING IN EARLY 1978' I.E.. A FEW WEEKS AFTER THE FAO CONFERENCE AS BEING TOO LATE FOR MAXIMUM UTILITY AND SOMEWHAT ANTICLIMACTIC.

11. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WASHINGTON WILL HAVE TO
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WEIGH IF THE ADVANTAGES LISTED ABOVE ARE CONSIDERED TO BE WORTH THE TRIP AND ADVISE US WHETHER TO GO ALONG WITH THE PROPOSAL, AND, IF SO, WHAT OUR PREFERENCES ARE AS TO TIMING AND HOW HARD TO PUSH OUR POSITION ON EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURE, TRADE, COMMITTEES, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OECDP07003
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770081-0881
Format: TEL
From: OECD PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770373/aaaacmls.tel
Line Count: 224
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 01fc3dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OECD PARIS 29697, 77 PARAMARIBO 13
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3150500
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROPOSED MINSTERIAL MEETIG OF OECD AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
TAGS: EAGR, OECD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/01fc3dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009